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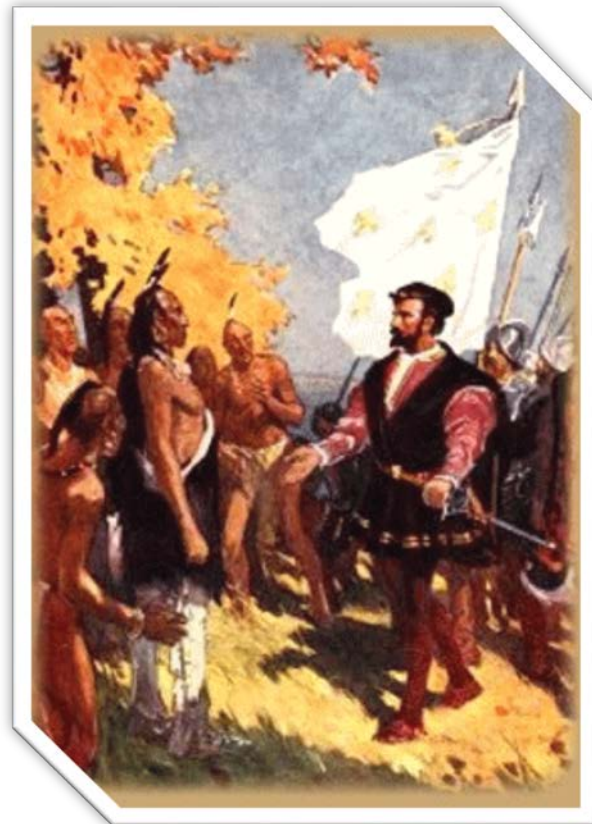


Fig. 1

Donnacona Chef des Iroquois du Saint-Laurent, représentant du chef du village de Stadacona (près de Québec) durant les voyages de Jacques Cartier (1534-1536)

Courtesy: hamerley.skyrock.com

Quebec: A History of Culture and Politics

QUEBEC: A HISTORY OF CULTURE AND POLITICS

This paper explores the relationship between Québec culture and politics, how they informed one another throughout the history of the province, and created a unique identity for the province. As Québec moves forward into a globalized world, which answer may or may not provide insights into the direction that the province may take in the future, but also how national identities have been formed and changed throughout the last century. Following an historical timeline the research is divided into five sections: 1. Historical Review; 2. The Great Darkness; 3. The Quiet Revolution; 4. Modernity and Globalization; and 5. Conclusion.

1. HISTORICAL REVIEW

From the mid-1500s to early 1700s, the French were in competition with the Spanish, Dutch and British for riches in the Western Hemisphere, all seeking to establish themselves in North America. In three separate voyages of discovery (1534, 1535-1536, 1541), Jacques Cartier sailed west across the Atlantic Ocean to Newfoundland and then discovered the fertile St. Lawrence Valley. (See Fig. 2) On his last voyage, Cartier attempted to establish a colony in the St. Lawrence Valley, and mine for gold. No colony was established, and the gold turned out to be iron pyrite ('fool's gold').¹ By the late 1500s, France and a number of other European nations had set up a seasonal fishery on the Grand Banks; however, the prevailing group was French fishermen from La Rochelle.² Besides the fishery, the demand for beaver pelts in Europe (in the manufacture of hats) encouraged the establishment of trading posts at Tadoussac (1600), Québec City (1608), and later, Montréal (1642). In 1701, French traders advanced further westward into the hinterlands and then south along the Mississippi and its tributaries, laying claim to a massive tract of land known as 'Louisiana.'³

¹ "Jacques Cartier Bridge," (website), *Héritage Montréal*, accessed 1 April 2018.

Of the many tributes paid to Jacques Cartier in Québec, an example is the 1930 contentious curved bridge in Montréal, whose construction decimated the working-class neighbourhood of Ste. Marie. The exception was a stubborn owner of a soap factory, who refused to sell his property to the city, 'and as a consequence, the bridge would have to follow a pronounced curve.'

² Brett McGillivray, *Canada: A Nation of Regions*, 2nd ed. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2010), 75.

³ *Ibid.*, 76.

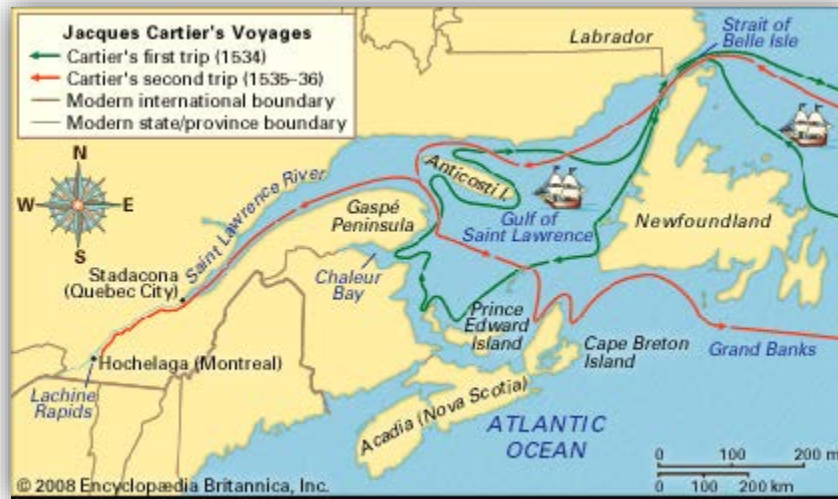


Fig. 2

In the St. Lawrence Valley the colony was named New France, which was economically, politically and socially, a blueprint of the feudal model in France. The king granted large tracts of land to the *élite* (*seigneurs*), who in turn subdivided the land into plots of about 75 acres each, and rented the plots to tenant farmers. The tenant farmers were required to pay a land tax to the *seigneurs*, and in addition, were required to perform fiduciary duty; that is, to provide some form of labour that benefited the colony, such as road construction. In turn, the *seigneurs* provided community services, such as mills and bake ovens. To provide access to markets necessitated a water transportation network for moving goods to the St. Lawrence and its tributaries, *Seigneurial* property was ‘divided into long narrow lots, each lot given a small river frontage’ – ‘measuring approximately 180 by 600 metres, each ‘long lot’ amounted to 30.5 hectares (about 75 acres).’⁴

During the colony’s first 150 years (1550-1700) of its existence, 10,000 people settled in New France. About one third (3,500) of the new settlers were contractual soldiers, who ‘accepted the Crown’s offer of a small plot of land if they chose to stay’ and start a family.⁵ Between 1663 and 1673, some 768 *filles du roi*, (daughters of the king), mostly single poor

⁴ Ibid., 148.

⁵ Ibid., 149.

French women and orphans around sixteen years of age, immigrated to the colony. Upon marriage they received the King's Gift of fifty *livres* for a commoner, or one hundred *livres* for a *demoiselle*.⁶ Around 4,500 indentured servants (*engagés*) were contracted by seigneurs for three years, after which they (like the soldiers) could choose either to return to France or to remain in the colony as independent farmers. Of the residual 1,500, about 500 were *seigneurs*, clergy, and merchants. The balance of the population consisted of prisoners (often smugglers), who were transported from France to provide a much needed labour force in clearing land for cultivation. By 1760, the population in the colony had grown to 70,000.⁷

The Roman Catholic Church played a central role in the daily lives of the colony's inhabitants. The Church inspired the devoted to see themselves as a 'chosen people,' which perhaps nurtured a consciousness of French-Canadian nationalism.⁸ Yet, in a practical sense, the Church was cognizant of the pressures on the land, and often encouraged their flock to re-establish themselves in new parishes in other regions. By the 1860s, the Church was encouraging migration to the marginal agricultural land of the northern clay belts (Abitibi-Témiscamingue Region). By the beginning of the 1900s, the French Canadian diaspora had dispersed across North America. The power of the church continued until the latter half of the twentieth century, which has proven a significant influence on the development of modern Québec.⁹

In the early art of Québec, Cornelius Krieghoff (1815-1872), a Dutch-Canadian painter who had trained in Europe, painted the French *habitant* engaged in the daily hardship of life in rural Québec.¹⁰ For example, his painting of *The Toll Gate* (1859) depicts roisterers (possibly inebriated) cheating the toll gate, to the dismay and anger of the gate keeper and a barking dog.

⁶ *La Société de Filles du roi et Soldats du Carignan, Inc.*, <https://fillesduroi.org/cpage.php?pt=5>.

⁷ McGillivray, *Canada: A Nation of Regions*, 148-152.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Charles C. Hill, Curator of Canadian Art, National Gallery, "Kriehoff was the first Canadian artist to interpret in oils. . . the splendor of our waterfalls, the hardships and daily life living on the edge of the new frontier."

Kriehhoff was also interested in Indigenous peoples, depicted in *The Basket Seller* (c. 1850).¹¹
(See Figs. 3 and 4)



Fig. 3 *The Toll Gate* (1859)



Fig. 4 *Indian Basket Seller* (c. 1850)

Courtesy: www.google.ca

In 1759, following the defeat of the French to British troops on the Plains of Abraham; the victory gave Britain at least nominal control of the eastern half of North America. However, in 1774, the Québec Act ‘extended the boundaries of Québec south to the Ohio River and west to the Mississippi.’¹² The Québec Act facilitated the loyalty of more than 70,000 French-speaking people. Not only did the Act extend Québec’s provincial boundaries, it guaranteed ‘Canadiens’ the right to preserve their cultural traditions: ‘the French language, the Roman Catholic religion, French civil law, and the *seigneurial* system.’¹³ Consequently, Britain was able to retain the vital support of the Church and the *seigneurs*, yet allowing Québec to develop as a distinct society, culturally separate from the rest of North America.¹⁴ On the other hand, while the Québec Act protected the rights of Canadiens, per se, it did not protect the rights of Aborigines, ‘Canadian Iroquois’ (Akwasasne, Kahnawake, Kanasetake, Oswegatchie, and their Amerindian

¹¹ Cornelius Krieghoff paintings images,
<https://www.google.ca/search?q=kriehhoff+painter&tbn=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUK Ewjps8ma2KHAAhWG-VQKHVukDFMQiR4IqgE&biw=1904&bih=955#imgrc=icho-RcVgyZ0AM:>

¹² McGillivray, *Canada: A Nation of Regions*, 153.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

allies), despite having supported British effort, not only in personnel but in military knowledge during the war with the French.¹⁵

The War of Independence (1775-1783) south of the 49th parallel attracted about 35,000 Loyalists – ‘both civilians and disbanded soldiers’ – who escaped persecution from American rebels and fled to the last bastion of British rule in North America – Canada. Many sought succor in the Maritimes; however, a substantial number settled in Québec, particularly in the region between Montréal and Niagara. This influx of new inhabitants, and their desire for representative government, impelled the British government to recognize the two very different populations of English and French. Thus, in 1791, Britain passed the Constitutional Act, creating the colonies of Upper Canada (primarily Anglophone settlers) and Lower Canada (predominantly settled Francophones). Each constituency was given its own elected assembly with the power to impose taxation.¹⁶

Since the British government encouraged Anglophones (English-speaking) to settle in Québec, Lower Canada was no longer entirely Francophone (French-speaking). The south coast of the Gaspé, on the Bay of Chaleur, attracted Loyalists who established towns such as Carleton, New Carlisle, and New Richmond. Other Loyalists settled in Appalachian, south and east of Montréal. This region became known as the Eastern Townships, and included new towns such as Sherbrooke, Windsor, and Richmond. Anglophones settled in Montréal, where French and Scottish traders amalgamated their joint interest in the fur trade in the early 1780s to form the North West Company (Nor’Westers). By the 1790s, the Nor’Westers were in stiff competition with the established Hudson’s Bay Company. Concurrently, Montréal was competitive in the lumber trade, increasingly becoming the supply centre for Loyalists and others journeying to Lower and Upper Canada to farm.¹⁷

By 1812, relations between Britain and the United States had severely deteriorated. Two key issues were in dispute: (a) Britain was at war with France, and, despite Britain’s request that the United States discontinue trade with France, the United States chose to defy British concerns. (b) Britain continued to buttress ‘Aboriginal resistance to American rule in the territory south of

¹⁵ D. Peter MacLeod, “Introduction,” in *Canadian Iroquois and the Seven Years’ War* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2012), ix-xii.

¹⁶ McGillivray, *Canada: A Nation of Regions*, 154.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

the Great Lakes.’¹⁸ Believing that the United States would receive Aboriginal support, the United States severed its relations with Britain and declared war on its former sovereign in June 1812. The situation exploited a schism in Aboriginal support. The Iroquois (Oneida and Tuscarora) espoused the American cause, while the rest of the Iroquois league led by Mohawk loyalists, fought for the British out of Niagara, decimating several isolated American settlements. The field of battle occurred on both sides of the border, as well as on the Great Lakes, Upper Canada, and in Lower Canada. Militia from Upper and Lower Canada, sustained by British regulars and its Aboriginal allies, repelled the invaders. Even if Lower Canada resented its provincial status as a British colony, ‘at least under British rule, they retained the essentials of their distinct society.’¹⁹ The War of 1812 not only defined the border between the United States and Canada, it foreshadowed the future divisions between the Indigenous peoples and the governments of Canada and the United States. Hostilities ended with the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, which recognized the contribution of the Iroquois Nation, and ensured that all pre-war lands belonging to the nation would be returned and financial support provided for their sustainability.²⁰ However, in years that followed, the United States chose to systematically force the Indigenous people westward into undeveloped territory, while Canada opted to incarcerate Aboriginal people onto reservations and assimilate their children through the residential school system.

Even though Francophone and Anglophone coalesced in the face of a common enemy, tensions between the two Canadas began to rise. Upper Canada had a larger base of good agriculture land to continually attract settlers than Lower Canada, which struggled with a growing population and scarcity of agricultural land. Further, in Lower Canada in the 1820s, ‘wheat crops were devastated by the wheat midge (a pest) and rust (a disease), and a slump in the price of wheat from 1835 to 1837 hit marginal farmers – notably the *habitants* – especially hard.’²¹ Simultaneously, the two Canadas endured political discontent in the elected assembly, which was relatively powerless compared to the parliamentary council appointed by the British governor. This situation was exacerbated in Lower Canada where the majority middle class

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Carl Benn, “The Last War Dance: 1814,” and ““Give Us Hopes of Finding Some Relief”: 1815 and Beyond,” in *The Iroquois in the War of 1812* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 153-193.

²¹ McGillivray, *Canada: A Nation of Regions*, 155.

(Francophones) felt defenseless in face of the appointed élite, who consisted almost exclusively of Anglophone Montréal merchants. This élite group, known as the *Château Clique*, apportioned taxpayers' money for projects such as canal-building, which benefited them, rather than for roads, which would have helped the struggling farmers.²²

Consequently, in 1834, the elected assembly of Lower Canada submitted to London a long list of demands for political reform prepared by its dominant party, the nationalist *Parti Patriote*, led by Louis-Joseph Papineau (1786-1871).²³ (Papineau was a provocative leader, one of contradiction and complexity. He was a lawyer; a *seigneur*; an orator (speaker) for the national assembly of Lower Canada; a moderate liberal who became an ardent nationalist, and yet, was an economic conservative; a revolutionary in the Rebellions of 1837; and a man of letters. Today, Papineau station is a Montréal Metro station in the borough of Ville-Marie.)²⁴ By 1837 the British authorities had not only rejected Lower Canada's petitions but further limited the authority of the assembly. In the meantime, rural disgruntlement was rising. By mid-November, dreading out-and-out rebellion, the British government decided to arrest *Patriote* leaders. Papineau fled to the United States (as did William Lyon Mackenzie of Upper Canada). By late November through December of 1837, armed rebellion broke out officially.²⁵ More than 300 *Patriotes* were killed; 12 were hung; and 58 were sentenced to life in the penal colony of Australia, although 55 would be repatriated by 1844.²⁶

In late 1837, hoping to alleviate tensions, Lord Durham, having achieved some success with Irish unrest, was appointed Governor General for British North America. Given the task of discovering the roots of the rebellion, Durham arrived in May 1838, and spent most of his six months term in Lower Canada. The Durham report would have sweeping consequences. The Report made three main recommendations: 'that the system of colonial government be reformed to put more power in the hands of the colonists; that Upper and Lower Canada be reunited; and

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 155-156.

²⁴ Fernand Ouellet, "Louis-Joseph Papineau: a divided soul," trans. Douglas Wurtele, *Canadian Historical Association* (1968, c. 1961), 1-24.

²⁵ McGillivray, *Canada: A Nation of Regions*, 156.

²⁶ Ibid.

that the allegedly backward people of French Canada be assimilated as quickly as possible into the culture of the English-speaking majority.’²⁷

Accordingly, in 1840 the Act of Union was passed and in 1841 Upper and Lower Canada were reunified to configure a single ‘united province’²⁸ recognized as Canada. ‘The two sections were renamed Canada East and Canada West, and an elected assembly was established in which both sections had the same number of representatives, even though the French majority of Canada East had the larger population at the time.’²⁹ This division only strengthened the resistance to assimilate by French Canadians.

For example, when British forces engaged in the Boer Wars in South Africa in 1899 and fifteen years later in Europe in 1914, Britain asked its colonies for military support. During the Boer Wars, Canada sent out two volunteer contingents, consisting of mainly those of British descent living in Canada. Of the eleven Canadian units that participated, none originated from Québec.³⁰ French *Canadiens*, who categorized the hostilities in Southern Africa and in Europe as ‘murderous imperial wars,’ refused to participate in conflicts on foreign soil (including France) that had nothing to do with the security of Canada. In the Great War, with a population of eight million, Canada agreed to a quota of 500,000 recruits. To reach this goal, it was necessary to conscript troops. There was spontaneous mayhem: anti-conscriptions leagues arose; protest meetings; riots broke out in Montréal at the end of August, 1917; conscripts fled to the woods. In late March 1918, in Québec City, a riot similar to those in Montréal broke out – the army was called in, martial law was imposed, then the military fired upon the civilian population, killing five and wounding many. Perhaps inevitably, the conscription process was a failure; only 19,050 were successfully conscripted; 18,827 refused to comply. Canada came out of the war deeply divided and the experience had a profound effect on French-Canadian

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Canada and the South African War (Boer War) – 1899-1902,” *WarMuseum.ca*, accessed 20 January 2018, http://www.museedelaguerre.ca/cwm/exhibitions/boer/boerwarhistory_e.shtml.

nationalism in the 1920s,³¹ and, like the first Great War, French Canadians would oppose once again conscription in World War Two, having no particular loyalty to either Britain or France.

Québec during the wars and inter-wars period was mainly rural. In the 1920s, cultural expression often appeared in terms of poetry, which ‘focus[ed] on personal lyricism, exaltations of the *terroir* [land], or experiments in formal beauty. . . ’³² In the 1950s novel, *The Outlander*, Germaine Guèvremont, wrote short stories and novels about the daily struggle in the Sorel region of Québec before the First World War. In the 1930s, a period in which worldwide economic depression unduly affected greater Montréal, ‘two poets made the reality of urban poverty a central theme of their verse:’ Jean Narrache (pseudonym for Emile Coderre) and Clément Marchand, drastically moved away from the established norms, albeit in different ways.³³ In his poetry, Narrache revealed the cultural climate of the 1930s; the society of the working class in Montréal. He eschewed from writing in the classical style and promulgated writing in ‘popular speech.’ On the other hand, Marchand ‘assumed the demands of the working class in aggressive and potentially revolutionary poetry.’³⁴ Meanwhile, visual artists wanting to participate in innovative art forms in Europe, ‘cast aside religion and experiment[ed] with different ideas of art[,] with the goal of establishing a new distinctiveness.’³⁵ Paul-Émile Borduas (1905-1960), leader of the *Groupe Automatiste* in Québec, loathed the commanding grip that the Catholic Church held over the people of Québec. Borduas believed that Québec’s narrow-minded nationalism and unreceptiveness to new ideas constrained its people to parochial development. (See Fig. 5) With fifteen members of the *Groupe Automatiste*, Borduas wrote *Refus global*, a manifesto released on August 9th, 1948, which reviled Québec’s ‘Catholic-centric collective identity.’³⁶ His involvement with *Refus global* cost Borduas his teaching job at the *École du Meuble*, where he had worked since 1937. Other painters and educators in Québec

³¹ Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, and Jean-Claude Robert, “Federal-Provincial Relations: The Conscription Crisis,” in *Québec: A History 1867-1929*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Chodos (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1983), 522-526.

³² Émile J. Talbot, “Populist Poetry in the 1930s: Jean Narrache and the Articulation of Powerlessness,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 41, no. 4 (December 2011): 479-494.

³³ Talbot, *Populist Poetry in the 1930s*, 479.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Loren Lerner, “Rejection and Renewal: Art and Religion in Canada (1926-2010),” *Journal of Canadian Art History* (Volume XXXIII: 2): 22.

³⁶ Ibid., 23.

believed that religion had no place in the instruction of Canada's artists.³⁷ However, in 1946, a counter movement began when two art teachers at the *Séminaire de Joliette*, along with five Québec artists, founded the group *Le Retable* to rededicate religious art in Québec.³⁸ (See Fig. 6) This conservative counter-action of distancing art from religion was in keeping with the iron-fist policies of the Maurice Duplessis government.



Fig. 5

Paul-Émile Borduas (1905-1960)
Groupement Triangulaire (1954)
Courtesy: www.invaluable.com



Fig. 6

Sylvia Daoust (1902-2004)
Mother and Child
Courtesy: Pinterest

2. THE GREAT DARKNESS 1936 - 1959

The *Union Nationale* came to power during World War Two. Maurice Duplessis became Premier, elected in 1936-1944 and again in 1946-1959. This ultra-conservative era has been described as:

a regime of great fear much more than of great darkness[...] [T]his regional political force created, through its discourse, a timid society that was propelled by the promise of universal access to the consumer world and mass culture, but in which everyone was under a constant state of surveillance, right down to the most ordinary details of life.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Luc Turgeon, "Interpreting Québec's Historical Trajectories: Between *La Société Globale* and the Regional Space," in *Québec: State & Society*, 3rd ed., ed. Alain-G. Gagnon (Peterborough, ON:

Not until the 1990s was a scandal revealed that defined this period of darkness, one that involved both the Duplessis government and the church. From the 1930s to the 1950s, the Duplessis government incarcerated orphans and many illegitimate children, placing them in church-operated orphanages and schools. Survivors claimed that many of their number were transferred to psychiatric hospitals in order that the provincial government benefit from increased federal subsidies. The orphans were subjected to physical and sexual abuse, electroshock and lobotomies. Not surprisingly, the Duplessis government fell, but the following Liberal government angered survivors upon the announcement of a special \$3 million aid fund. The 3,000 surviving orphans had demanded a public inquiry be held, and declared that the compensation meted out was an affront to what they had suffered.⁴⁰

An earlier challenge to the Duplessis administration was the Asbestos Strike in 1949. Upon coming to power in 1936, Duplessis abolished the unemployment benefit program, which had been a Liberal initiative. For Duplessis, it was not in the government's interest to pay unemployed workers. This decision would prove game-changing.

In consequence, on February 14th, 1949, in the towns of Asbestos and Thetford, Québec, 5,000 asbestos miners launched an illegal strike to force the Johns Manville Corporation (JM) to negotiate with its mineworkers. Not only did the workers strike for higher wages and a healthier workplace, they were upset over the inequality of the operating environment. Since the work was conducted in English, the English minority, comprising only ten percent of the workers, maintained control of the most attractive jobs, while French Canadians were regarded as 'white negroes.'⁴¹

The town of Asbestos is located in the Eastern Townships of Québec, and its Jeffrey Mine has produced over eighty percent of the world's chrysotile asbestos. It was not until January 1949 that the community became aware that its workers and the health of the public were at risk

Broadview Press, 2004), 58. The quote is from Sociologists Gilles Bourque, Jules Duchastel, and Jacques Beauchemin.

⁴⁰ "Duplessis Orphans," *Macleans's*, 15 March 1999, 25, accessed 25 January 2018, EBSCOhost, ezproxy.caou.ca/login?url=https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=1744016&site=eds-live&scope=site.

⁴¹ "Challenging Authority: Québec asbestos miners launch a bitter strike foreshadowing a revolution in French Canadian Society," *CBC Learning*, accessed 27 January 2018, 1-3, <http://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP15CH2PA2LE.html>.

of contracting asbestosis. Asbestosis is caused when ‘microscopic asbestos fibres are inhaled over an extended period of time and build-up in the lining of the lungs,’ preventing expansion and contracting of the lungs; and eventual death by suffocation.⁴² Since its founding in 1927, ‘hundreds of thousands of asbestos injury claims and lawsuits have been filed against JM.’⁴³ In 1982, JM filed for bankruptcy, but by 1988 was able to emerge from insolvency and create the Manville Personal Injury Settlement Trust (\$2.5bn) to resolve all asbestos-related claims against JM.⁴⁴ By early 2012, the trust received 773,990 claims, and paid out \$4.3bn.⁴⁵

Mon oncle Antoine (1971), (See Fig. 7) the bittersweet film of director Claude Jutra, recreates the story of an impoverished asbestos mining town in Québec in the 1940s. Despite their poverty, the villagers plan on celebrating Christmas at the town general store run by Antoine and his wife, which has replaced the church as the central meeting place. The villagers detest the owners of the mining company, who pay them starvation wages and treat them poorly. One character refuses to return to the mine; instead, he finds work in the forest; in effect, returning to *le terroir*. The following still from the film (See Fig. 8) shows a background of a snow-covered mountain of asbestos tailings overlooking the town, while a representative of the mine owners driving his horse and buggy through the main village street, unctuously tosses handfuls of candy in lieu of wage increases to the miners, just before Benoit, the main character, and his friend throw snowballs at the surprised horse and official.⁴⁶ Before the Christmas Eve celebrations begin, Antoine, who also acts as the town’s undertaker, is called away to remove the body of a teenage boy. It is a time of awakening, a coming of age for young Benoit, who accompanies his uncle, witnessing the aftermath of death and the inconsolable grief of the mother, of whom Antoine, unable to fill the role of priest, is powerless to alleviate.

⁴² Jessica van Horssen, “‘À faire un peu de poussière:’ Environmental Health and the Asbestos Strike of 1949,” *Labour/Le Travail* 70 (Fall 2012): 101-132.

⁴³ Matt Mauney, “Johns Manville – History, Litigation & the Manville Trust,” (website), ed. Walter Pacheco, accessed 10 April 2018, <https://www.asbestos.com/companies/johns-manville.php>.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Mon oncle Antoine*, directed by Claude Jutra (1971; Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2015), YouTube (uploaded by NFB), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ43h-gWZ6Y>.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Courtesy: National Film Board of Canada

The acrimonious strike lasted more than five months and inadvertently presaged an upheaval in Québec society, not only diminishing the iron rule of Duplessis, but causing a fundamental shift in Québec culture. Although Duplessis claimed that he supported French workers, in essence he supported the Anglo and American owners; mainly due to his antagonism towards communism and the perception of foreign influence on labour unrest. The church to Duplessis' annoyance supported the strikers. Politically, it catapulted the careers of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Jean Marchand, and Gerard Pelletier, and foretold the rise of the Liberal government.⁴⁷

An additional blight on the Duplessis administration was the mishandling of a sporting event that took place on March 13th, 1955, between the Montréal Canadiens and the Boston Bruins. During the hockey game, Montréal's star player, Maurice Richard was high-sticked on the head (which later would require five stitches). When the first opportunity arose, Richard retaliated, utilizing his hockey stick as a weapon against the player who had injured him. A bloody brawl ensued. Three days later, Richard was suspended by Clarence Campbell (President of the National Hockey League) for the remainder of the season, which included the Stanley Cup playoffs. Four days later, on March 17th, where 16,000 fans had gathered at the Montréal Forum to watch the Canadiens and the Detroit Red Wings hockey match, a tear-gas bomb exploded.

⁴⁷ CBC, *Challenging Authority: Quebec asbestos miners*, 1-3.

The bomb was a touchstone for an ugly and tumultuous disturbance that was the most destructive and costly riot of the period in Canadian sport.⁴⁸

There was political and social change in the air and rising political star Pierre Elliott Trudeau wrote and edited *La Grève de l'amiante* (1956), a collective of ten essays, an anthology on the Asbestos Strike. Trudeau wrote that there was “a turning point in the entire religious, political, social, and economic history of the Province of Québec.”⁴⁹ Trudeau did not address workers and their communities on environmental health concerns,⁵⁰ instead, according to Neatby, “the emphasis [was] on the intellectual and institutional context in which the strike occurred.”⁵¹ In his ‘Epilogue’ Trudeau concluded that the Asbestos Strike did not translate to a “philosophical revolution.”⁵² This would lead to a new era where French-Canadiens will change to that of the Québécois.

3. THE QUIET REVOLUTION 1960s - 1970s

The beginnings of the Quiet Revolution evolved during the Second World War, when a shortage of labour to fulfill the wartime needs in the manufacture of military armaments was supplied by women. French-Canadian women, entering the labour market for the first time, left behind traditional rural values and the domination of the church. The urban economic prosperity that followed the war would lure many rural Quebecers to abandon the hard tenure of farming for the easier lifestyle of city (or suburban) living with its trappings of worldly goods. At the same time, other societal values were shifting – particularly for women: the accessibility to higher education; the later marriage or the single state and a career; or birth control and smaller families. In 1960, the election of Liberal Jean Lesage as premier ramped up the privatization of industries formerly under the yoke of the Roman Catholic Church. For example, the church lost its battle for educating the young when secularization translated to a huge investment in public

⁴⁸ Sidney Katz, “1945 – 1955,” *Maclean's*, 10 October 2005, 28-34, accessed 27 January 2018, [EBSCOhost,ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login?url=https://search-ebSCOhost.com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=18540431&site=eds-live&scope=site](https://search-ebSCOhost.com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login?url=https://search-ebSCOhost.com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=18540431&site=eds-live&scope=site).

⁴⁹ Pierre Elliott Trudeau, *La Grève de l'amiante* (Montréal: Editions du Jour, 1970), épilogue.

⁵⁰ van Horssen, *Environmental Health and Asbestos Strike*, 103.

⁵¹ H. Blair Neatby, “Turning New Leaves,” *Canadian Forum* 35 (October 1956): 162, accessed 1 January 2018, <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/docs/asbestos/6Bi.htm>.

⁵² Neatby, *Turning New Leaves*, 163.

education. Also, privatization led to the development of an enormous civil service that attracted women in particular, as when electric utilities were nationalized under the auspices of Hydro-Québec. The provincial government also promoted French-Canadian culture, ‘supporting artists, filmmakers, and publishers, encouraging a sense of specifically Québécois nationalism that demanded constitutional amendments to protect and strengthen provincial powers.’⁵³

In 1967, to celebrate the centenary of Canada’s confederation, the federal government had Expo in Montréal to support unity and federation. At the same time, Trudeau became a prominent figure in support of a united Canada. On July 24th, during an official visit to Canada, and using the attendance at Expo 67 in Montréal as a pretext, President Charles de Gaulle of France stood on the balcony at city hall in Québec, and in stentorian accents cried: “*Vivre le Québec libre!*” (“Long live free Québec!”)⁵⁴ De Gaulle’s interference in Canadian affairs infuriated much of Canada.

The Quiet Revolution was instrumental in the rise of René Lévesque and his *Parti Québécois* (*PQ*) in Québec. The *PQ* grew out of several dissident nationalist movements that highlighted the oppression of the French by the English. With support from the *petite bourgeoisie* and garnering sufficient working class votes, the *PQ* was carried to power in 1976.⁵⁵ In 1977, the *PQ* government passed Bill 101, making French the official language of the province, although there were concessions made for English businesses.⁵⁶ At the same time, the *PQ* drew attention to economic disparities between Anglophones and Francophones, where French-speaking Quebecers were treated as second-class citizens. Lévesque’s proposal of sovereignty-association was intended not only to gain autonomy for Québec, but also to restructure its economy. Although the 1980 referendum was defeated (60 percent ‘No’ to 40 percent ‘Yes’), the federal government was sufficiently shaken to promote constitutional reform.⁵⁷

⁵³ McGillivray, *Canada: A Nation of Regions*, 173.

⁵⁴ “*Vivre le Québec libre!*” *CBC News*, 24 July 1967, accessed 29 January 2018,

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/charles-de-gaulle-speech-50th-anniversary-1.4218130>.

⁵⁵ William D. Coleman, “Introduction,” in *Independence movement in Quebec 1945-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 15.

⁵⁶ McGillivray, *Canada: A Nation of Regions*, 174.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Tensions continued between the federal government and Québec. In contrast to the non-violence of the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, a small group of political dissidents sought violence as a means of provoking change in Québec. The dissenters, *Le Front de libération du Québec (FLQ)* during this period, had engaged in various bombings and vandalism; however, in 1970 the *FLQ* had graduated to kidnapping, a violent action that precipitated the October Crisis. On October 5th, the Liberation Cell of the *FLQ* kidnapped British trade commissioner, James Cross, a symbolic figure of British colonialism. Acting independently, without consultation with the main Liberation Cell, the Chenier Cell kidnapped French-Canadian provincial cabinet minister, Pierre Laporte. Evidently, even though Laporte was Francophone, he was seen as a representative of the dominant class and not as a member of the Francophone working class. The federal government took the kidnappings seriously, and perhaps over-reacting, imposed the War Measures Act (1970). The Act made membership in the *FLQ* illegal, and ‘the police were given the authority to detain suspected members [and *FLQ* sympathizers] for up to twenty-one days without being charged and up to ninety days without a trial.’⁵⁸ The body of Laporte was found soon after the Act had passed. Cross was more fortunate, and was freed several weeks later. In exchange for his release, the kidnappers were permitted to leave Canada. These events shocked sympathetic *FLQ* supporters, and the senseless killing of Laporte destroyed any further support for the *FLQ*.⁵⁹

The downfall of the *FLQ* led to the rise of the *Bloc Québécois*. The *Bloc* was an alliance of disillusioned Conservative and Liberal Members of Parliament (MPs) who abandoned their parties after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord in June 1990, where they had hoped to form an interim association. The coalition as a political party was formed in 1991, with Lucien Bouchard as its leader until 1997. When the *Parti Québécois (PQ)* was unsuccessful in its 1995 Québec sovereignty referendum, the *Bloc* pressured the *PQ* into continuing to foster sovereignty and to uphold Québec’s ‘interests and values’ in the nation’s capital. In 1997, the *Bloc* chose Gilles Duceppe to succeed Bouchard. In the 2006 federal election, the *Bloc* succeeded in winning 51 seats, 42 percent of the popular in Québec. In 2008, the *Bloc* won 49 seats, a drop to

⁵⁸ Kenneth McRoberts, “Québec in the Wake of the Quiet Revolution: Politicization of Language and Class: The Front de Libération du Québec,” in *Québec: Social Change and Political Crisis*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1993), 200-202.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

38 percent of the vote. After twenty years, Duceppe resigned after the *Bloc* was decimated in the 2011 election. In 2017, Martine Ouellet, who twice failed to win the *Parti Québécois* leadership, became the *Bloc Québécois* leader by acclamation.⁶⁰ It would now seem that the *Bloc* is a party of the past. With seven of ten members leaving the *Bloc* caucus, Ouellet's future as leader of the Québec sovereignty movement is in jeopardy and the *Bloc's* future as a party extremely dicey.⁶¹

In recent times, the rise of the populist right globally has instilled new vigor into the radical left *Québec Solidaire (QS)* and further diminished the moderate left, the *Parti Québécois*. The *PQ* in a last gasp stance, led by leader Jean-François Lisée, has proposed *la convergence* (alliance) that would see the 'two sovereigntist parties refrain from running a candidate in selected ridings where competing against each would allow the Liberals or the right-leaning *Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ)* to slip up the middle.'⁶² However, *QS* party members quashed *la convergence*. Although *CAQ* replaced the *PQ* in popularity, the *PQ* still recommended a Charter of Québec values that would prohibit civil servants wearing "ostentatious" religious symbols such as the hijab, and restricting immigration, which persists in preoccupying the party.⁶³ As the Quiet Revolution drew to a close, it was not only politically that the Québécois were active. According to Canadian writer, poet, and lecturer, Robert Kroetsch, Canadian literary theory of the 1980s and 1990s had 'evolved directly from Victorian into Postmodern,' where post-modern signified a shift from dreams of sovereign independence to more local concerns.⁶⁴

This sentiment was echoed by Marcel Fournier, a commentator on Québécois literature and society. An example of Québec *la modernite* (1979-1990) in literature are Pierre Milot's *La*

⁶⁰ Daniel Leblanc, "A brief history of the Bloc Québécois," *Globe and Mail*, 13 August 2010. See also, "The Bloc Québécois through the years," *Globe and Mail*, 3 May 2011. See also, Andy Riga, "Bloc Québécois' new leader: Who is Martine Ouellet?" *Montreal Gazette*, 14 March 2017.

⁶¹ Daniel Leblanc, "Bloc Québécois fractures as MPs bolt over leadership," *Globe and Mail*, 1 March 2018.

⁶² Konrad Yakabuski, "The Parti Québécois is on the brink of extinction," *Globe and Mail*, 1 June 2017.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Marie Vautier, "Comparative Postcolonialism and the Amerindian in English-Speaking Canada and Quebec," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 28, no. 3 (October 1996): 4, EBSCOhost, ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login?url=https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lfh&AN=9709030570&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Camera obscura du postmodernisme (1988), and, Janet M. Paterson's *Moments postmodernes dans le roman québécois* (1990). Québec postmodern contemporary texts were now

marked by those deconstructionist techniques common to much postmodernist fiction: irony, parody, playful self-reflexivity, metafiction, intertextuality and challenges to the previously hegemonic Christian liberal humanist ideal.⁶⁵

According to Jane Moss, the 'artist as protagonist, is not a new phenomenon in Québec drama.' Even though current Québec plays show many adaptations, there are traits of postmodernism. Creative writers probe the 'relationship between literature, truth, and reality.'⁶⁶

4. MODERNITY AND GLOBALIZATION 1980 – present

The results of the 2011 federal election, revealed that popular support for the *Bloc Québécois* had declined dramatically, and that there had been excellent support for the New Democratic Party (NDP) among Québec voters. Can this new reaffirmation to the NDP party signal that Quebecers are embracing a 'commitment to Canada and the federal government?'⁶⁷ Since 1993, the presence of the *Bloc* in Ottawa 'has been perceived as a source of frustration and annoyance, [and a] threat, not only to other federal parties but to a large number of voters outside of Québec.'⁶⁸ Other federal parties, such as the Conservatives or the Liberals feared a possible coalition with the *Bloc* would translate to unacceptable persistent blackmailing (for example, any small community in Québec, that needed a new hockey rink, would have one constructed, courtesy of other taxpayers in Canada). It would seem that the NDP party has risen as the alternative solution.

In the past, the *Bloc* holding about fifty of Québec's seventy-nine federal seats, made it difficult to form a majority government and, more importantly, seriously affected the decision-making process. Since the 2004 elections, the *Bloc* has been responsible for an increase in

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Jane Moss, "Staging the Act of Writing: Postmodern Theater in Quebec," *The French Review* 71, no. 6 (May 1998): 940.

⁶⁷ François Rocher, "The Orange Wave: a (re)Canadianisation of the Quebec electorate?" *Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, Working Paper 2013-04 (Ecole d'études politiques, Université d'Ottawa):*1-18, accessed 29 January 2018.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

minority governments. The strong support for the NDP indicates ‘Quebeckers’ desire to enter into a genuine dialogue with the entire national community. Québec would once again demonstrate both a sound and credible presence in the Canadian arena.’⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the fear of assimilation remains. Of great concern to all political parties in Québec were the declining birthrates in the Francophone population. Studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s mostly showed that Québec Francophones held a more negative view towards immigration and ethnic and cultural diversity than other Canadians. Francophone cultural insecurity was exacerbated by a declining birth rate and the propensity of immigrants to integrate to the province’s Anglophone minority. However, since these studies were conducted, Québec has been able to increase its control over immigration to the province. In the 1990s, with the rise of French-speaking immigrants and language legislation, the integration of newcomers into the Francophone milieu is no longer perceived as posing a threat to cultural security.⁷⁰

Today, this is not necessarily so. Since 2009, there has been a steady decline in the birth rate in Québec. From a peak rate of 1.73 children per fertile woman (between 15 and 49 years of age) in 2008 and 2009, the birth rate in 2015 was 1.60 children per fertile woman. *L’Institut de la statistique du Québec*, recorded 86,800 live births in 2015, a drop of about one percent in the birth rate from 2014.⁷¹ The 2015 Statistics Canada Census released this data for live births in Québec: 2014/2015 (87,000 births); 2015/2016 (86,900 births); and 2016/2017 (84,700 births).

The 2016 census data on language indicated that the percentage of people in Québec who listed French as a mother tongue had decreased to 78.4 percent in 2016 from 79.7 percent in 2011. The data also suggested that the percentage of Québec Anglophones had increased significantly across the province. On May 30, 2017, *Parti Québécois* leader Jean-François Lisée announced in the legislature in Québec City, that his party will table for a new language law (should the party be elected in 2018) in response to the 2016 census. The new legislation, which

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Elisabeth Gidengil, André Blais, Richard Nadeau, and Neil Nevitte, “Language and Cultural Insecurity,” in *Québec: State and Society*, 3rd ed., ed. Alain-G Gagnon (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 345.

⁷¹ Kate McKenna, “Quebec birth rate drops for 6th straight year,” *CBC News*, 27 April 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-birth-rate-2015-1.3555115>. See also, Statistics Canada 2015, Birth Rates.

Lisée labelled as Bill 202 (formerly known as Bill 101 in 1970s), would require businesses with twenty-five or more employees to conduct business in French (at this time, the number was fifty or more people). Lisée said only French-speaking immigrants should be allowed in Québec. The exception is refugees, who are claiming asylum, and can learn French once they have arrived.⁷²

All the same, an ever-declining birth rate, an aging population and the growing shortage of skilled workers has spurred Québec to consider opening its doors to increased immigration. The province estimates that between 2013 and 2022, about 1.1 million people will retire, and that ‘this situation underscores the need to reassert immigration’s role and contribution to Québec.’⁷³ However, immigration has not been dispersed evenly throughout the province. The majority of immigrants are not from France, Belgium or Switzerland; they are arriving from French Africa, the Maghreb and the sub-Saharan, such as Senegal. Newcomers are attracted to large urban areas, particularly Montréal. Statistics Canada estimates that by 2031, visible minority groups will comprise thirty-one percent of the population of Montréal (as opposed to five percent elsewhere in Québec).⁷⁴ This has created tensions and ‘growing cultural and linguistic divisions between Montréal and other cities.’⁷⁵ For instance, Brossard, a Montréal suburb, has more immigrants than in all of Québec City, the capital, and second-largest city in the province.⁷⁶ Further, Montréal is having difficulty assimilating immigrants already arrived; with unemployment rates for newcomers at eleven percent compared to seven percent for non-immigrants.⁷⁷ Studies have shown that immigration ‘creates a neutral benefit to the economy,’ and to affect Québec’s aging population and resolve labour shortages, immigration must increase substantially.⁷⁸ There is growing concern that 50,000 to 60,000 immigrants arriving every year are changing the cultural

⁷² “Only French-speaking immigrants should be allowed into Quebec, PQ leader says,” *Canadian Press*, 10 August 2017, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/mobile/politics/only-french-speaking-immigrants-should-be-allowed-into-quebec-pq-leader-says-1.3540861>.

⁷³ Giuseppe Valiante, “Low Quebec birth rate spurs some calls for increased immigration,” *Canadian Press*, 9 May 2016, 1-5, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-low-birthrate-immigration-1.3573966>.

⁷⁴ Valiante, *Low Quebec Birth Rate spurs Immigration*, 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

face of Québec. ‘The challenges of a francophone society is not just about protecting the French language, but protecting all other aspects of Québec culture which certain immigrants, even when they do speak French, may not share.’⁷⁹ The distinctiveness of Québec society and culture is one of assimilation, not multicultural, as defined in the rest of Canada. The obvious wearing of religious symbols, such as the niqab or burqa, has been a contentious decade-long debate over the accommodation of religious minorities in Québec. In October 2017, the National Assembly in Québec City passed Bill 62, the ‘religious neutrality law,’ which bans face-covering when giving and receiving any public service (provincial and municipal).⁸⁰ Other laws in Québec, require the mandatory public greeting of *bonjour* (good morning, good day), and the posting of public signage in French. Given its uniqueness, the challenge is whether Québec can successfully compete within a global economy.

Since Confederation, Québec has been appeased by some form of sovereignty in that the province has been given distinctive society status, and has its own juridical legal system (pertaining to the administration of justice) under which civil matters are regulated by French-heritage civil law. In Québec, the National Assembly makes Québec law, although the province must respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In addition, Québec collects and manages its own personal income tax. Accordingly, even in the midst of protecting its cultural future, Québec demands economic support from Ottawa so that Québec can participate in the worldwide economy.⁸¹ Also, in furtherance of placating federal/provincial tensions, the federal government has supported specific manufacturing industries in Québec.

For instance, Bombardier is an aerospace giant in competition with Boeing in the United States, and Airbus in Europe. Bombardier’s corporate roots harken back to 1937 when founder Joseph-Armand Bombardier successfully launched his seven-passenger ‘B7’ snowmobile. Following this initial commercial success, Bombardier designed and manufactured snowmobiles

⁷⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁰ Angelica Montgomery, “What you need to know about Quebec’s religious neutrality legislation,” *CBC News*, 17 October 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/burqa-niqab-national-assembly-quebec-liberal-government-stephanie-vallee-1.4357463>. See also, Katie Dangerfield, “Quebec’s face covering ban: What you need to know about the controversial law,” *Global News*, 19 October 2017, <https://globalnews.ca/news/3813019/quebec-face-covering-ban/>.

⁸¹ Alain-G. Gagnon, “Québec-Canada’s Constitutional Dossier,” in *Québec: State & Society*, ed. Alain-G. Gagnon, 3rd ed. (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 127-147.

for ambulance use, freight transport, mail delivery and school transportation services. (See Fig. 9) After the founder's death in 1964, Bombardier transitioned into other transportation sectors, such as the aerospace industry. In 1973, the world oil crisis forced the company to halve its production of snowmobiles and concentrate its resources on mass transit and subway systems. By 1982, Bombardier was the leader in rail transit in North America. In 1986, the federal government privatized Canadair, (a nationalized subsidiary of other manufacturers of civil and military aircraft), which was purchased by Bombardier. Canadair became the nucleus of Bombardier Aerospace, and was awarded a lucrative CF-18 maintenance contract over a Winnipeg competitor. Since 2005, Bombardier's small corporate jetliner, the C-Series has been heavily financed by the governments of Canada and Britain. Development costs of \$5.4bn and concerns over the jetliner's saleability, required a Canadian government bailout of \$4bn, and an additional \$2.8bn in 2015. In 2016, Delta Airlines in the United States purchased seventy-five jetliners. Boeing (who have not manufactured the C-Series type since 2006, and have no future plans to do so), took exception to the sale, accusing Bombardier of dumping low-priced jets upon the American market, and complained to their Commerce Department to impose countervailing duties. Boeing's threats put into jeopardy 3,500 jobs in Québec, and 4,500 jobs in Northern Ireland. Canada counter-threatened with a cancellation of \$5bn in Boeing military jets.⁸² Meanwhile, at the grassroots level, Québec politicians blamed each other for the future loss of a valuable asset, that of the Bombardier 'C' Series aircraft. In 2015, the Québec government invested another \$1.3bn for a nineteen percent return investment, but in which there is uncertainty that the province will recover the investment as the program moves ahead under Europe's Airbus Group SE in 2025.⁸³

⁸² Duane Pokan, "Aerospace Giant Bombardier Began as a Snow Mobile Manufacturer," *Thomasnet News*, 12 February 2018, EBSCOhost, [ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login?url=https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bwh&AN=128079215&site=eds-live&scope=site](https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login?url=https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bwh&AN=128079215&site=eds-live&scope=site). See also, "Aerial bombardment; Aircraft manufacturing," *Economist (London)* 424, no. 9059 (23 September 2017): 67.

⁸³ Les Perreux, "Bombardier deal fuels consternation in Quebec: Government critics question potential loss of an economic and engineering jewel, and the fate of province's \$1.3-billion investment," *Globe and Mail*, 18 October 2017, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.capilanou.ca/docview/1951814620/fulltext/97EEF95C59384498PQ/43?accountid=36786>.



Fig. 9

Bombardier B-12 (1948)
Courtesy: Pinterest

A second example is that of a small Montréal business, an enterprise propelled to international status by hard work and creativity. *ChocoStyle International* is the brainchild of Annie Roggero of Montréal. After studying chocolate-making for five years in France and around the world, Roggero opened her first chocolate shop in the basement of her house in 2000. With the assistance of her son, Roggero created a niche for her chocolate creations. They transformed chocolate into ‘fashionable’ shapes that targeted women: shoes, boots, lipsticks, purses, cell phones, ‘TiddleSticks’ (gummy bear Kebabs), and chocolate moustaches. *ChocoStyle International* attracted attention at North American food trade shows, and exposure led to contracts with Costco, Burlington Coat Company, and Bed Bath & Beyond. Through their contacts at transnational trade shows, their products became international. By 2012, the *ChocoStyle International* diversified, creating Axenta, ‘the distribution arm of a variety of companies [that mostly dealt in the] confectionery gift segment . . . [by assisting] smaller manufacturers navigate the North American market, working as a confectionery designer, manufacturer, distributor and agent.’⁸⁴

A third illustration is of Québec’s shoe manufacturing industry, of which three histories are related here. Dack’s, the Canadian luxury handcrafted footwear store, which filed for bankruptcy in 2009 after 175 years, is re-débuting its product line of twenty-five classic and

⁸⁴ “*ChocoStyle* marries chocolate and fashion,” *Ascent Media*, April 2016, www.candyindustry.com.

modern-day styles. The rub is that although Matthew Dack in Québec City has the exclusive rights to the Dack's brand, the manufacture of the Dack's product-line is in the United Kingdom. It takes about eight weeks to handcraft a pair of shoes, and purchasing a pair of Dack's shoes is only available through the Matthew Dack on-line store.⁸⁵

In the mid-1960s, a young student immigrant, Albert ("Aldo") Bensadoun experimented with a pair of clogs, 'graft[ing] the leather upper typical of a Swedish clog onto the elevated sole of a Japanese geta wooden sandal.'⁸⁶ Within a couple of days, Bensadoun had sold all sixty pairs that he had manufactured at a *Le Château* consignment space in downtown Montréal. The Aldo brand has never looked back: 'Today, the Aldo Group sells some \$1.8bn worth of shoes a year and has 1,600 stores in 80 countries around the world.'⁸⁷

In the National Assembly, the *Action démocratique du Québec* and *Parti Québécois* charged the Liberal government with lack of 'vision' and 'laz[iness]' for allowing Crocs Inc. to shut down its plant in Québec City, and with the closure came the loss of 669 jobs.⁸⁸ The company which had created and manufactured the popular colourful plastic shoes began as Foams Creation Inc., and was purchased in 2004 by Crocs Inc., based in Colorado. The Québec City facility manufactured only four percent of Crocs production worldwide.⁸⁹ Blaming the higher Canadian dollar, rising oil prices, global competition, and the United States recession, Crocs made the move to reduce production costs, transferring the Canadian production to seven existing plants in Mexico, Italy, Romania, Bosnia, China, Brazil, or Vietnam. However, Crocs sales and marketing division has expanded its retail stores across Canada.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ "Dack's fine Shoes for Men since 1834 – Canadian Firm Re-Launches Iconic Luxury Shoe Brand with Online Store," *Canada Newswire*, 14 February 2012.

⁸⁶ Martin Patriquin, "One Shoe After the Other," *Maclean's*, 5 November 2012, 41.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Rheel Seguin, "Quebec indignant as 600 Crocs workers get the boot," *Globe and Mail*, 16 April 2008: A.8. See also, "Crocs Inc. announces closure of its Canadian plant," *CNW Telbec*, 14 April 2008.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, A8.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, *CNW Telbec*.

5. CONCLUSION

Québec remains today, as it was since its founding in 1608 at Québec City, an anomaly: Until the middle of the last century, the province has been a parochial society, described by Lord Durham as a 'backward' state. Its parochialism or narrow-mindedness can be attributed to the complete control imposed upon the people by the Roman Catholic Church, an obedience that was endured by the population from birth to death for nearly 300 years. In the 1900s, along with thirty years of 'iron fist' ultra-conservatism under the Duplessis government, disaffection with the church increased following World War Two, and by the 1950s the church had lost its hold over the people. Not only did the people disavow their relationship with the church, they shed far-right conservatism and wholly embraced a secular society. In fact, Québec is considered the least religious province in Canada.

The Quiet Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s opened many doors, particularly for women freed from the smothering power of the church that expected women to remain in rurality caring for a large family, who were able to attain higher education that qualified them for civil service. The Liberal government that succeeded Duplessis in 1959 established an education system known as CEGEP that was based on the French system, which employed 10,000 people, invited mercantilism to the province, and undertook massive government construction projects, such as Hydro Quebec. In addition, the province would now be exposed to cultural trends from around the world.

Industrialization attracted people to cities and to an easier style of urban living with shorter working hours, more leisure time and consumer spending. The desire for smaller families would propel government incentives to increase the rates of child birth, thereby, ensuring that Québec maintained its distinct society. Since its inception the child assistance program has been beset by cost overruns.

However, like a chrysalis, Québec became a more open society, attracting not only an increasing number of immigrants, but free speech and political activism. New political parties flourished, challenging old established parties, as the present government in power. There was a growing feeling of nationalism.

In retrospect, the War Measures Act of 1970 seems to have been over-kill by the federal government. The general public was not in imminent danger of revolution from a small group, consisting of less than one hundred members, and the detention of more than 500 individuals (perhaps popular at the time), culminated in even more alienation between Québec and the rest of Canada. Within Québec, it was an opportunity for the *Parti Québécois (PQ)* to enact social and political change. The *PQ* passed Bill 101, the official French language act, and called for sovereignty-association. The former haunts Québec today, and the latter, particularly with the disarray within the sovereigntist party, the *Bloc*, seems to have lost impetus as Québec moves forward towards a globalized economy.

Thus, Québec must decide how the state is going to proceed. Without higher fertility rates in the Québécois population to replace an aging population, the province will need to increase immigration. Absorption of minority groups will change the face of Québec culture; minorities must speak French, but that is the only common thread they share with Québécois. Politically, there is pressure to return Québec back to its old state of a closed society. The question is what does Québec want? It is unreasonable for the rest of Canada, to have to prop Québec financially, and yet, acquiesce to the province's need to continue to be a distinct society. Québec seems to have abandoned its dreams of sovereignty, and even though moving into a globalized modern economy, the province once again resists assimilation and tries to protect its distinct language and culture. At the height of the separatist movement, then premier René Lesveque believed that Québec could only achieve independence through association. In the last fifty years, much has changed and much remains the same.

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